

The most Barbarous of
MURTHERS,

Detected and Punished. 518 *5*

CONTAINING

A sad and Lamentable ACCOUNT of
the most Treacherous Poysoning a
whole Family at

PLYMOUTH,

In the County of

DEVON.

By the means of one *Phillippa Cary* a
Nurse, and *Ann Evans* a Maid Servant in the
House; of which poysoning two dyed, &c.

Together with

The manner of its Discovery, the Confession
of the Criminals, the Discourse they had with several
Ministers; their Behaviour in Prison, at their Tryals,
and place of Execution, with the manner thereof.

And many other things Remarkable.

Licensed according to Order.

Printed by J. G. for C. Dennyson, at the
Stationers Arms within alegate.

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THE RECORDS OF
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Done and Pa^{ssed}. 516

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Printed by J. G. for C. Denton, at the
Sign of the Anchor within Abchurch Lane.

THE GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE YEAR 1701

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(3)
Poysoners Rewarded with DEATH.

O R,

The most barbarous of Murthers
Detected, &c.

AS the Sin of Murther is ever accounted the most heinous of Crimes with Men, so is it held in sacred Writ, and by the Antient and Modern Divines, so cry loudest in the Ears of the Almighty. Many sad Instances I might reckon up, but shall briefly content my self with giving my Reader a sad (though true) Account of two Persons, who made away their Mistresse by Poyson; and likewise Poysoned the whole Family, for which they deservedly suffered at *Plimouth*, in the County of *Devon*. The Relation of which, take as followeth.

A true account of the heinous Murther, with the Circumstances attending.

One Mr. *William Wicks*, a Dyer in *Plimouth*, together with *Elizabeth Wicks* his Wife, *Mary Pengelly* her Daughter, and *John Pengelly* her Son, after eating some Broth, prepared for them by one *Phillippa Cury*, a Nurse in the

House and one *Ann Evans* a Prentice Girl to the said Mr. *Weeks*, fell suddenly and desperately sick, with violent Purgations or Castings, and great Swellings in the Stomach, accompanied with extream Pains, cold Sweats, Faintings, and much Drought, of which *Elizabeth Weeks* died within a very short space; the strangeness of which Accident made those that survived be hink themselves of speedily sending for a Physician, who observing the manner of the Distemper, and the many Symptoms that appeared, gave it as his absolute Opinion that they were poysoned, and immediately applyed such things as were requisite, to prevent the further effects of the poyson; notwithstanding which, *Mary Pengelly* died in great Torment eighteen days after, but Mr. *Weeks* and the Child recovered.

Now it so hapned, that during this consternation and disaster in the Family, a quantity of yellow *Arsenick* (a poyson of a crudy and corroding quality) was found mixed with the Oat-meal, part of which had been put into the pottage, which gave great suspicion that there was Treachery in the House, and finding at the same time that *Philippa Cary* and her husband counterfeited themselves to be poysoned, and had taken things under pretence of restoring them to health: they, together with the aforesaid *Ann Evans*, were suspected to be

the contrivers of this mischief, and had put their wicked contrivance in practice, none else being conversant in the House, nor having opportunity to do it; which suspicion encreasing, they were carryed before a Magistrate, where *Ann Evans* upon her first Examination Confessed (the Thursday, or day before the di-aster happened) she was sent by Mr. *Wicks* her n-a-ster, to fetch some Oatmeal, which she bought of *Joan* the Wife of one *George Searl*, some of which she put into the Pot, to make broth or pottage, and gave part of it to the persons before mentioned to be poisoned, viz Mr. *Wicks* Wife, Daughter, and her Son; upon which they all fell sick, and that looking in the Oatmeal afterwards, she found some yellow thing in it, which she had since been told was: poison.

This being the substance of her first Examination, it was further deposed by the Physician, that the yellow stuff in the Oatmeal was poison, and by others, that some of it had been found in the sink, where the remaining part of the pottage had been cast away; as likewise to the sickness of the persons mentioned, and many other corroborating circumstances.

As for *Phillippa Cary*, she owned there had been a difference between her and Mrs. *Wicks*, but that it was again reconciled, and she dined there, eating some of the broth, and had great pains after, and was told that *Ann Evans* had

fallen out with her *Mistress*, and was resolved to go away with the *Mountebanks*.

Things being thus far in a manner in the dark, a farther and more strict Examination was taken of both the parties, in which they plainly impeached each other; *Ann Evans* confessing, that she being in the Garden gathering Herbs, had a paper flung over to her, or layd (as she supposed in her way, with a yellow stone in it, which she then took for painting, but since is found to be poyson; that she brought it in and laid it up, but soon after found the Nurse grinding it between two tiles, and asking her what she was going to do with it? she replied, she was going to fit a medicine for the old woman, meaning *Mrs. Wicks*; and then put some of it in a Dish, and let it steep in Water and Beer all night, advising her, the said *Ann*, at the same time to put some of it into the old Womans dish, when she took up her Broth, and then they should see what sport they should have with her on the morrow; and further, that she had often threatned to fit her, and promised her self a wonderful deal of felicity when she (meaning *Mrs. Wicks*) was removed; and had some days before put a Spider in her Drink, and chid the said *Ann Evans*, because she did not break it, or (as she termed it) squat it abroad; she further said, that *Phillippa Cary* said, that that which she had fitted wou'd do

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the old Womens work, and make her dye within an hour, changing her upon her life that she should not tell of it, for unless she did, it would never come to light; saying, if she did tell she would deny it, and put it all upon her; and that according as *Phillippa Cary* had ordered it, she did put some of it into her mistresses dish of pottage with bread, and that her mistress eat them and her Daughter, with some of the like poyson, did eat an other dish, as likewise did *Mr. Wicks*, and about three hours after *Mrs. Wicks* being taken with great pain and drought, sent for a pot of strong Beer, into which *Phillippa Cary* put some of the Beer the poyson had been steeped in, and then carryed it up to her Master and Mistress, as also did the Daughter, and that the next day she found the Tankard discoloured and cankered with the force of the poyson, and the Nurse, viz. *P. Cary* had her scower it out, *well* *show* *well*

She further Confessed, That being troubled at their sudden sickness, that so unexpectedly hapned in the Family, she said, alas! Nurse what have you done? To which she replied, as to what she had done to *Mrs. Wicks*, she had done God good service in it, to rid her out of the way, and hoped that she had done her business, and lookt upon it that she had done no sin in it.

Phillippa Cary being Interrogated to this

pers, and many other the like charged upon her, stoutly denyed all, but the discourse she had with her about the Spider; saying, That she had heard *Ann Evans* declare, that she would make away with her Mistriss, there being a difference between them some time before, and being demanded, why she did not reveal it, she said, she desired her to conceal it, for if she did not, she should be even killed.

She being again demanded, whether *Ann Evans* did not shew her the yellow Stone, and whether she did not break it into poulder, and steep it in small Beer; and give some of that which she had broken to the said *Evans*? and and told her she should put it into the old Womans dish, or words to that effect: she utterly denyed any such matters, but believed they should both dye for it, because she had concealed the Counsels of *Ann Evans*.

There were likewise the Examinations of diverse Witnesses taken against them, as well before the Corroner, as several Justices of the Peace; for upon notice of *Mrs. Vicks* being dead, and that it was given in by the Physicians, that she was poysoned, the Corroner sent to inquire into the cause of her death: who having thereupon Impannelled a Jury, and Examined the Witnesses, it was found wth *Useful Advice*, all agreeing that the deceased was poysoned.

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The like Verdict was also given by another Jury, upon the view of the Body of *Mary Pen-elly*, who deceased about 17 days after: so that the Criminals being Prisoners in the Prison adjoining to the Town-Hall, in *Plymouth*, were often visited by divers Ministers and others; where *Ann Evans* continued her former Confession, with some Addition, expressing an extraordinary sense of Sorrow: but *Phillippa Cary* continued obstinate, and seemed very little concerned, considering the deplorable condition she was in.

From *Plymouth* they were removed to the Castle of *Exon*, where they continued for the space of six months, at what time the Judges arrived to hold the Assize for the County of *Devon*.

The Prisoners being Arraigned, were put up on their Tryals, and a clord of Witnesses appearing against them, beside their own Confessions, in their respective Examinations, and having little material to offer in their own behalves, they were found Guilty. viz. *Ann Evans* of Murther and petty-Treason, *Phillippa Cary* of willful Murther only; and the reason of this distinction was, that the said *Evans* was a Covenanted Servant, and had more immediately the Lives of the Family in her power: so that she received Sentence, to be drawn up-
on

on a Hurdle to the place of Execution; and the other to be hanged only.

After Judgment given against them, having asked what they could say to stay Execution of Death? *Philippa Cary* pleaded she was with Child, but upon her being Examined by a Jury of Matrons, it was found that she was not quick with Child: then they petitioned for Transportation, but that was denyed them, and *Plymouth* where they had done the Fact, appointed to be the place of their Execution, or last Stage of their mortal Lives; and thereupon they were returned to the prison from whence they came, to bewail their deplorable condition; where the Reverend Diocesan (out of the Religious care he had for the happiness and welfare of their Immortal Souls) ordered two Ministers to attend them, which other Ministers, moved by the like Charity and Compassion, did at sundry times, urging and pressing them to a true and sincere Repentance; Exhorting with prayers and tears to seek Christ whilst he was yet to be found, even while they are yet in the Land of the Living, and on this side the Grave, in which there is no Repentance.

Mary Evans being charged by a Minister that came to visit her, if the Nurse (meaning *Philippa Cary*) were Innocent, she should not for a World accuse her; for if she did, she added

ded yet more Guilt to that which she had com-
 mitted; to which she replied with Tear, Sir,
 I am a lost Creature, I have no hopes in this
 World, I would not willingly damn my Soul,
 by drawing upon me the Guilt of more blood;
 I speak it as in the presence of God, I had not
 put the poyson in the broth had not the Nurse
 bid me do it: and added. my blood is lost, but
 if the Lord would please to have mercy upon
 my Soul, it is all I desire; and, continued she,
 the Nurse hath said she should never confess,
 though she should hang for it; that I might con-
 fess what I would, she would not confess any
 thing. But Phillippa Cary being charged with
 this, and urged by a free confession to take
 shame to her self, and give Glory to God, she
 obstinately denyed it; saying, Alas! Sir, what
 will you have me to say? I will tell you all I
 know of it, I am as free from this Crime, as the
 Child that is new born, but the maid did it,
 for she told me she was weary of her Life, by
 reason of her mistriss, that was such a curst old
 Woman, that there was no living with her,
 and that she was resolved to leave her Service
 and go away with the Mountebanks; and told
 me she would fit her, and had bought the Rat-
 tare of the Mountebanks boy or man, with
 whom she was in Love, and in this manner she
 seemed all along to justifie her self, yet owned
 she was privy to, and knowing of the wicked
 pro-

project which too fatally took effect; nor would the terrors threatned to hard-hearted, obstinate and an impenitent Sinner (though urged in their most dreadful and amazing circumstances) awaken her, or render her sensible of her guilt, she ever alledging that she had committed no Sin, for which she deserved to dye; and though it was promised her (upon the word of a Minister) that if she confessed her Guilt to him in private, he would not reveal it, without her consent; or if not to him, yet to any godly learned Minister, or to some judicious private Christian, yet she refused it; and when the necessity of an ingenious and publick confession was urged, her positive answer was, That it was enough to confess to God, and why should she confess unto men? and much in the like obstinate temper she continued, till the day of Execution, though no pious Exhortations, or admonitions were spared, to bring her to a true sight and sence of her sins; at last indeed she did confess she put the Spider into the Cup, and bid the Maid, viz. Ann Evans, squat it; adding soon after, that she knew the wicked maid had an intent to make away her mistress, and that she did it, but said she, I was loath to discover it, and now I must suffer for her fault.

As for the Maid, she continued very penitent, and was frequent in weeping, prayer, and meditation; reflecting much upon these comfortable

comfortable Sayings, viz. **This is a true and fa-**
ithful saying, worthy of all to be received, **That**
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,
of whom I am chief. And when she heard it
 repeated by the Minister, she said, Yea Sir, I
 am the greatest sinner in Plymouth: (And a-
 gain) **That whosoever comes unto Christ,** (that
 is, believes in him) **he will in no wise call out.**
 And lastly, viz. **That the Blood of Christ clean-**
seth from all Sin. And being told that she
 must be in Charity with all the world heartily
 and sincerely, forgiving even the Nurse that
 had seduced her, &c. To which she cheerfully
 replied, Sir I will do it, and it shall not grieve
 me, though she should live; though I dye only
 for this fact, I forgive her, as I expect to be
 forgiven of God. Upon this, the Ministers
 began to give her Cordial assurances of Hea-
 ven and Everlasting happiness, after the end
 of this Transitory life; and to struggle against
 the naughtiness of her heart, natural depravi-
 ty and subtil Temptations of the Devil; and
 to strengthen her to undergo her pain, by gi-
 ving her in some measure, a prospect of Eter-
 nal Rest. And much in this Estate continued
 she till the day of Execution, and therefore for
 brevities sake, I shall pass over some other dis-
 course that happened in Prison between the
 prisoners and Ministers that came to Visit,
 Exhort, and pray with them, as being to no o-
 ther

her purpose than what has been already mentioned.

The manner of the Execution of Ann Evans and Phillipa Cary, with their Behaviour, and the Proceedings thereon, &c.

THE day of Execution being come, Ann Evans and Phillipa Cary, being taken out of the Castle of Eton, were conveyed with a Guard and numerous attendance, to Plymouth, the place appointed for their Execution, the former upon a Hurdle, where she was fastned to the Stake, and the Iron Hoops put about her; and the latter was likewise mounted upon the Ladder: They being in this posture, Ann Evans desired a Minister that had frequently visited her in prison, to pray with her; but it being thought requisite that the Established Order of the Church should be observed; the Common Prayer was first Read, which being done, the 13. Psalm at her request, was Sung, she joyning with the people in Singing: and being questioned again about her Offence, she owned it, and greatly abhorred her self for it; and in nothing more, than that it was a dishonour to God, and that it made her unworthy of his favour and blessing; yet she professed her Faith and hope of Salvation, through the alone Merits of Jesus Christ, into whose hands

she commended her self, and desired to forgive
 all the world, even the Nurse that had drawn
 her into Destruction; adding, that she pati-
 ently submitted to her death, because she had
 deserved it; and said, it was her wish, that all
 others would take warning by her Example;
 and taking the Minister by the hand, said, Sir,
 Will you not pray with me? did you not pro-
 mise me you would? and so proceeded to im-
 plore it with Tears: Whereupon he prayed
 with her, intreating God to be merciful to her
 poor Soul, to strengthen her Faith, and to re-
 ceive her into the Arms of mercy, &c. After
 which, weeping and taking him by the hand, she
 said, I am never able to requite you for all
 your labour of Love, care and pains about the
 Salvation of my precious Soul, but the Lord
 will I hope; the Lord reward you, the Lord
 recompence you for all these kindnesses, I thank
 you with all my heart; and then intreating
 she might not be put to too much Torment;
 and hearkening to the good Advice that was
 given her, she willingly Composed her self to
 Dye; and what's much observable, was, that
 all the skill and diligence of the Executioner
 and his Assistants, could not make either Pow-
 der, Wood, or Fuel, take fire till she had been
 dead by Strangling, a quarter of an hour: And
 further, that as soon as the fire was kindled,
 the Wind that blew in the back of Cary, im-
 mediately

mediately killed, and drove the Smoak full
 in her face, for almost the space of two hours;
 in which time Sun Ching was consumed: du-
 ring which space, the Hang-man, who was her
 Friend, and who, as 'tis said, had promised ne-
 ver to Execute her, had withdrawn himself
 with the Halter, and for a time was not to be
 found; but at last being discovered under the
 Clifs, he was brought back, and after her long
 and obstinate denial of the Crime for which
 she suffered, he somewhat unwillingly perform-
 ed his Office, her last words being said to be
 those of the Psalmist, viz. Judge and revenge
 my cause. O Lord.

And thus Dyed these two miserable Crea-
 tures by the hand of Justice, the one for her
 Meekness, Penitence, and ingenious Confes-
 sion, much pittied and deplored: And the
 other for her Obstinacy, and for Evil Life,
 fearfully Regretted.

F I N I S

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